



In Remembrance of Tom Determan

By: **Dusty Stoabs, PE, LEED AP**

ASHRAE Central Oklahoma Chapter Historian

It is with a heavy heart that I write about the passing of Tom Determan. Tom joined ASHRAE in 1964 and was elected to the Central Oklahoma Chapter Hall of Fame in the year 2000. Just that fact alone tells you all about what he meant to the chapter. My first day at Streets Mechanical Contractors in January 2015, I remember talking to one of their senior project managers, who is now retired. With me being a design engineer, he wanted to talk all about the differences between engineers and contractors and about which engineers consistently produce good drawings and which, well let's say, may have less than good drawings (he didn't put it that nicely). With this project manager having been on the job for about 40 years, he's seen many, many designs from every engineering firm in town. From that conversation, I'll always remember what he told me about who he thought had the best mechanical designs: Tom Determan. I thought, "Wow, that Tom Determan must be something else." He certainly was. As you read his obituary below, you'll see why. He epitomized the best of all of us.



Dusty Stoabs, PE, LEED AP
2023-2024 - ASHRAE Central Oklahoma - Chapter Historian

"Thomas Edward Determan passed away on October 5, 2023, leaving behind a legacy of integrity and hard work. He was born on November 30, 1934, in Okarche, Oklahoma to Herman H. Determan and Anna J. (Schaefer) Determan. Thomas lived a life filled with purpose and made significant contributions to his community and the engineering industry.

Thomas attended Holy Trinity Catholic School and graduated from high school in 1952. He went on to pursue higher education at Oklahoma A&M College (now known as OSU) and graduated in January of 1957 with a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering. After graduating from college and equipped with both knowledge and determination, Tom began his career at Douglas Aircraft.

However, his dedication to serving his country prompted him to enter the U.S. Navy shortly after getting married to his college sweetheart Janie Maloney. From 1957 to 1960, he served as the Damage Control Officer & Engineering Officer aboard the U.S.S. Bauer DE1025 based in San Diego. This experience allowed Tom to develop skills that would become invaluable later in his career.

Following his military service, Tom and Jane returned to Oklahoma. They settled in Okarche for several years before moving to Oklahoma City in 1965. Tom joined forces with his college classmate Dave Scheirman at Sorey, Hill & Sorey Architectural/Engineering Firm. There he worked diligently for several years while honing his engineering and design expertise.

During this time, Tom was loaned out to Merchants Transfer Co., where he played a crucial role as the Assistant Manager & Project Engineer for the installation of structural steel and support equipment in six Atlas Missile Silos near Altus Air Force Base in southwest Oklahoma. The project was a high priority due to the Cold War situation, requiring everyone involved to work long hours. However, shortly after completion, the Atlas Missile Sites were deactivated.

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In Remembrance of Tom Determan (Continued)

Although Tom was a driven professional, his true joy came from practicing his faith, spending time with his family, and inventing various useful items. He even obtained a patent on a plumbing product that he created. Tom and Jane have been members of St. Charles Borromeo Catholic Church for almost 60 years. During that time, he served on different committees and was a lector at Mass.

He was a dedicated Little League baseball coach who wholeheartedly supported his son's passion for the sport. Additionally, one of his favorite recreational activities was taking his family to Lake Tenkiller for water skiing and fishing adventures. These treasurable moments created lifelong memories and showcased Tom's ability to find fulfillment in his faith, work, and family life.

Thomas is preceded in death by his daughter Teresa, but leaves behind a loving family that will forever cherish his memory. He is survived by his devoted wife Jane, three daughters Vicki Weissenborn (husband Paul), Pamela Snellings (husband Todd), Mary Baker (husband Phillip), one son Brian Determan (wife Jessica), and six grandchildren Matthew Weissenborn, Amy Weissenborn Gorter (husband Jake), Noah Baker, Nathan Baker, Ben Determan, and Scarlett Determan.

Thomas Determan will be remembered as an exceptional individual whose dedication to his profession and love for his faith and family enriched the lives of those around him. His unwavering commitment to excellence serves as an inspiration for future generations. We extend our deepest condolences to all who mourn the loss of this remarkable man. May his soul rest in eternal peace."



Tom Determan
1934-2023

**2000 Central Oklahoma Chapter
Hall of Fame Recipient**

